

# **System Configuration Team (SCT)**

## **Reasonable & Prudent Measure #26 Meeting Notes September 27, 2001**

### ***Greetings and Introductions.***

The September 27 meeting of the System Configuration Team was held at the National Marine Fisheries Service offices in Portland, Oregon. The meeting was chaired by Bill Hevlin of NMFS and facilitated by Richard Forester. The agenda and a list of attendees for the September 27 meeting are attached as Enclosures A and B.

The following is a distillation (not a verbatim transcript) of items discussed at the meeting, together with actions taken on those items. Please note that some enclosures referenced may be too lengthy to routinely include with the meeting notes; copies of all enclosures referred to in the minutes are available upon request from Kathy Ceballos of NMFS at 503/230-5420.

### ***1. August SCT Notes.***

Hevlin distributed the draft August SCT meeting notes, and asked that any comments be provided to him at the October SCT meeting. No comments were provided on the July SCT minutes at today's meeting.

### ***2. Flood Control Study Update.***

Tim Kuhn of COE provided this update. Hevlin noted that the flood control study is a BiOp RPA item. Normally, he said, this would be a TMT item; however, there is also a connection to SCT, hence this agenda item. Kuhn explained that he is the project manager for the flood control study, which he described as a major undertaking, involving multi-state and multi-country issues. The idea is to change the way we do flood control to provide more water in the spring, Kuhn said; it is an effort that will involve many agencies and entities, and it will be a major project.

To date, we have done an initial appraisal, a document that the Corps does to explain that something is different, economically or environmentally, and to document the need to do the study, Kuhn continued. The appraisal, a compilation of all of the relevant available information, has now been sent to HQ. We expect to get feedback on that item within 30 days, he said, and

will have a better idea of where we're going at that point.

It's an exciting study, Kuhn said, with the potential to lead to a lot of positive change. He asked anyone with issues or questions to contact him directly at 503/808-4752.

In response to a question from Christine Mallette, Kuhn said the objective of the study is for the Corps to complete a feasibility analysis of the current way it operates the flood control system to provide more water in the spring, to improve the ecosystem as a whole and benefit salmon. Basically, said John Kranda, we'll be evaluating the adequacy of the current flood control system in light of the new realities and priorities in the basin, as called for in the BiOp. We will be conducting the study with an open mind, and we'll just have to see what the results tell us. Kuhn noted that the scoping process, in which a wide array of organizations and agencies will be contacted, is particularly crucial.

In response to a question from Jim Ruff, Kuhn reiterated that the initial appraisal is now complete; once we receive feedback from HQ, he said, we'll have a better sense of the schedule and funding authority under which this process will proceed. Kuhn said he anticipates that the scoping process will take at least a year, and that the feasibility analysis itself will take two to three years to complete. And will the scope include the Willamette? Kim Fodrea asked. I don't know, at this point, Kuhn replied – at some point, it will have to. And you'll also be updating the 30-year-old damage assessment curves? Ruff asked. Yes, Kuhn replied, as well as levy stability.

When will the scoping meetings begin? Ruff asked. After the initial assessment is approved, Kuhn replied – again, at that point, we'll have a better idea of where the funding for the study will be coming from. Will the IA be made available for our review once headquarters approves it? Fodrea asked. Certainly, Kuhn replied. I would encourage you to provide briefings for various Regional Forum groups – TMT, SCT and IT, certainly – once the scoping process begins, Ruff said. Absolutely, Kuhn replied. Fodrea noted that the RPA deadline for this item is September 2005 – are you concerned about that? Personally, I am, Kuhn replied – we'll just how see how efficiently we can get through the process.

### ***3. Lower Granite Removable Spillway Weir Update.***

Hevlin said several SCT and FFDRWG members made a trip to Lower Granite and watched the RSW in operation; he said Mike Mason will be providing an overview of the test results. John Kranda distributed Enclosure C, a status report on the Lower Granite RSW test.

Mason spent a few minutes going through this document, touching on construction status, hydraulic test results and biological test results. In general, he said, we thought the RSW performed pretty much as expected; there were no real surprises in the hydraulic test results. There was some concern about a "roostertail" effect prior to the hydraulic test, but those concerns proved to be largely unfounded, at least under the conditions used in this test.

Mason added that the next step in the RSW evaluation process will be a balloon-tag biological test, tentatively scheduled for November 1-9. Equipment installation and a potential

pre-test will be done on November 1-2, with the full balloon-tag test running from November 5-9. Balloon-tagged fish will be released from three locations – through the RSW, through a conventional spillbay and a control release in the tailrace.

Mason said in-depth discussion of spring operations at Lower Granite still need to occur; there was a preliminary discussion of spring operations at Lower Granite on September 11. More discussion of spring operations is scheduled for the October 24-25 Walla Walla FFDRWG meeting.

Kim Fodrea noted that Reclamation is concerned that the original intent of the RSW may have been lost. Steve Rainey replied that “original intent” is a relative term. I don’t agree, said Fodrea.

Hevlin noted that there is a desire on the part of Lower Granite project personnel to test the operation of the tainter gate on Spill Bay 1; this test would require about 20 minutes of spill this Monday, followed by up to three hours of spill later in the week. The group discussed this operation, raising a variety of questions and concerns, most having to do with the potential detrimental impacts of such a test on adult steelhead migrants. Mason said he will pass these concerns along to the appropriate personnel within the Corps. Mallette said she will also try to get FPAC’s feedback on the proposed tainter gate test, and will communicate any concerns they may have to the Corps.

Mallette added that ODFW is currently re-assessing the staffing assignments within her work group; the upshot is that she may no longer be participating in the Regional Forum. In the interim, until that decision is made, Mallette asked that any SCT-related communications be addressed to ODFW’s Ron Boyce.

#### ***4. Lower Monumental Stilling Basin Erosion Repair and End-Bay Deflectors – Summary of the Preliminary Plans and Schedule to Accomplish the Work.***

Mason said the Corps is in the process of gathering together the design and contract documents needed to advertise this project; award is scheduled for mid-February. The Corps’ hope is to issue its notice to proceed in early March, with the 170-day erosion repair construction period scheduled to begin in early May. The 114-day deflector construction period is scheduled to begin in late October 2002, right after the erosion repairs are scheduled for completion. The key to the schedule will be our ability to begin the erosion repair work in early May, Mason said; we can only start that in-water work once the threat of involuntary spill has passed, so much will depend on the 2002 water year. In response to a question from Mallette, Mason reiterated that there will be no voluntary spill at Lower Monumental in 2002. Rainey expressed NMFS’ appreciation for the Corps’ hard work in securing the funding that will allow the repairs to proceed in 2002 – if we had had to wait for the normal funding process, he said, the repairs might not have gotten underway until 2005 at the earliest.

#### ***5. Portland District FFDRWG Update.***

Rock Peters went through the most important items discussed at the last Portland District FFDRWG meeting, including the following:

- John Day end-bay deflectors and removable spillway weir (tailrace egress continues to be an issue; the Corps is working to develop a test strategy to address this concern).
- John Day survival test (no 2001 data available yet; the synthesis report is available)
- John Day 12 vs. 24-hour test (planning for the test continues; the next planning meeting is October 1, and all SCT participants are encouraged to attend)
- John Day North Shore AWS
- John Day South ladder improvements (FFDRWG agreed that this work should proceed; construction will take place in 2002-2003)
- John Day ESBS (the 2002 test will include lamprey as well)
- Bonneville adult fallback (the 100% report on the three-alternatives strategy is due in December)
- Bonneville adult PIT (final plans and specs were provided to FFDRWG yesterday; final comments due October 18)
- The Dalles surface collection prototype (in 2002, the Corps is proposing to repeat the 2001 test, due to concerns about the influence of the water year and operations on 2001 test results. FFDRWG has recommended that the Corps move ahead on plans and specs)
- The Dalles survival program (the stilling basin radio transmitters did record data, some of which is very useful; however, only five of the 64 antennas installed is still in place. The Corps has already redesigned the equipment and feels the problem will be alleviated in 2002. The High-Z turbine mortality test report is now available)

#### ***6. SRWG Update.***

Peters observed that decisions about how studies are prioritized will be especially crucial for FY'02, given the importance of this year's study package to BiOp implementation, and the sheer number of proposals received. In the estuary arena alone, Peters said, we have received twice as many proposals as we anticipated, and we simply don't have enough money to fund them all. Once we get a better handle on the cost estimates, Peters said, it will be time to address the question of which proposals should receive the highest priority. Hevlin noted that a further complication is the fact that, in some cases, multiple studies have been proposed to answer essentially the same question; it isn't going to be easy to decide which of those studies should receive the highest priority, he said. Clearly, said Hevlin, any feedback the SCT can provide on which studies should receive the highest priority will be especially helpful this year.

#### ***7. Update on Budget Appropriation and Any Changes to FY'02 CRFM Project List.***

Kranda said little enough has changed on the CRFM budgetary front since the last SCT meeting that he did not feel a new version of the spreadsheet was necessary at this time. He said Portland and Walla Walla District project managers are in the process of finalizing their FY'02 work plans; if any significant cost changes arise in the course of that work, he said, I will

incorporate them into an updated spreadsheet.

With respect to the appropriation, said Kranda, next Monday is October 1, the start of the new fiscal year; we do not yet have an appropriation for FY'02. After that date, we will go into what is called continuing resolution, which essentially means that we will continue to work on the things we've been working on – model studies, construction contracts, planning and specifications. Given the fact that the House and Senate proposals are only \$2 million apart, said Kranda, we don't anticipate any major surprises once the appropriation goes through. There should be more to report next month, he said.

#### ***8. Next SCT Meeting Date.***

The next meeting of the System Configuration Team was set for Thursday, November 8. Meeting notes prepared by Jeff Kuechle, BPA writer-editor pool.